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S E C R E T RANGOON 001572

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR DRL, H, AND EAP  
STATE ALSO FOR USAID  
BANGKOK FOR USAID RDA/ASIA (STIEVATER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2014

TAGS: [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMESE PRO-DEMOCRACY LEADERS REQUEST FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT -- DO WE EXTEND A LIFELINE?

REF: A. RANGOON 1450  
[B](#). RANGOON 1507

Classified By: COM CARMEN MARTINEZ FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Congress has appropriated and earmarked millions of dollars to support Burma's pro-democracy movement and those Burmese seeking refuge from the junta's tyranny. While a portion of this funding appropriately supports thousands of Burmese who have fled their country, direct support for the pro-democracy movement inside Burma, despite the dire need, is much smaller in scale.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) As detailed refs A and B, Embassy Rangoon has recently received two requests for USG financial assistance from pro-democracy leaders. The first is from an association of ten pro-democracy political parties, the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA). The UNA's member parties, most of whom have been de-registered by the regime, represent ethnic minority groups. The parties are well aware that such assistance would not have the sanction of the SPDC. The second request came indirectly from U Tin Oo, the Vice Chairman of the National League for Democracy who has been imprisoned or under house arrest since May 2003, via his wife. The request is to rent a house for \$300 per month, as the vacant rental property provides the only source of money for food and utilities for U Tin Oo and his family. The NLD, as a party, has not requested direct USG financial assistance.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Post seeks the views of the Department and others regarding the possibility of undertaking a small-scale, stealthy program of financial assistance directly to pro-democracy leaders inside Burma who have asked for our support. Such assistance would best be aimed at helping sustain the parties' organizational and leadership capabilities.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) COMMENT: \$100,000 would be an adequate initial sum for the short- to mid-term sustenance of the pro-democracy leadership as per the two requests described reftels. Post suggests that a tailor-made, Post-administered contract or purchase agreement would be the preferred delivery mechanism. For example, the leadership of participating political parties could provide a nominal product, such as a written account of its experiences in the 1990 election, in exchange for a relatively modest sum that could be used to help sustain the party. Further, U Tin Oo's vacant rental property could be used, nominally, to store materials for our "Global English" Program. End Comment.  
MARTINEZ